

# Suburban Life

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(958)

## OWL has a birthday

### All efforts zero in to help make life better as women grow older

Farmington Chapter OWL (Older Women's League) will join sister chapters from throughout the country to celebrate the fifth birthday of the grassroots organization formed exclusively to focus on the concerns of middle and older women.

Members of the local chapter and guests will gather at 7 p.m. Friday, Oct. 25, in Farmington Community Center with guest speaker Pam Harwood, judge of the 36th District Court, for dinner, entertainment and a birthday surprise.

Another 15,000 members will be celebrating with similar parties for the organization that grew out of a White House Conference on Aging in October, 1980, and was connected in kind with the Displaced Homemaker Network.

Laurie Shields, author of "Displaced Homemakers: Organizing for a New Life," took her message across the country about 10 years ago, resulting in government-funded programs for the divorced and displaced homemaker being established in 30 states.

That behind her, coupled with the frustration some women felt in being slighted during the conference on aging, Shields and a cadre of women who had worked getting the Displaced Homemaker programs underway banded together for the formation of OWL.

The entire premise of OWL is based on the fact that women experience aging differently than men. Statistics show that women live between seven

and eight years longer than men and live out the latter part of their lives, on the average, with smaller incomes than men. These statistics were not taken into consideration during the conference on aging.

OWL'S SPECIFIC targets are inequities for women in the Social Security laws, inequities in pension rights, inadequate access to health-care insurance, discrimination for the older woman in obtaining a job, and obtaining some kind of respite for the caregiver of the chronically ill, more often than not a woman.

In the words of Virginia Nicoll, Farmington OWL president, "Women are much more likely to be unmarried, live alone and without health insurance until they reach Medicare age. Older women are the majority of the elderly poor, in part because the value of women's work, both in the home and in the marketplace, goes unrecognized in American society."

"They face multiple barriers in getting jobs they need to support themselves and to provide for their later years."

"In addition to working to combat age and sex discrimination in employment, OWL is pressing for needed changes in Social Security which will benefit women, for correction of pension inequities, greater access to health insurance for mid-life and older women, assistance for women who care for the aged ill, and a restoration of ser-

vices and entitlements for women which have been slashed by recent budget cuts."

BOTH LOCALLY and nationally, OWL works to provide mutual support for its members, to improve the image and status of the older woman, and bridges the gap between women's groups and organizations representing the aging to achieve these goals.

Currently, from its headquarters in Washington, D.C., OWL has gotten underway a "Citizens Council on Earnings Sharing," an advocate group to serve as a watchdog and catalyst to insure that a comprehensive earnings-sharing plan becomes a major subject for public discussion.

And OWL's Caregivers Task Force has prepared a model Respite Care Bill to provide relief for homebound caregivers, which has been receiving increasing attention.

Research papers devoted to issues of particular importance to women as they age, published as "Gray Papers," are an on-going project.

The Farmington Chapter of OWL was convened in January 1981 by Janet Good, a Farmington Hills resident who served as its first president and is now serving on OWL's national board. The local chapter is comprised of about 75 members.

Guests are invited to learn about the workings of OWL, both locally and nationally, at the birthday party.

JUDGE HARWOOD'S talk for the evening is called "Success: The Grand Illusion," which will tell of the difficulties women still face in seeking advancement in the business and professional world.

She is a graduate of University of Michigan and Detroit College of Law. She is a former hearing referee for the Michigan Department of Civil Rights, a member of Women Lawyers Association of Michigan, National Association of Women Judges and vice president of the National Conference of Women's Bar Association.

Dinner for the evening will be catered by Judy Antlehn, a culinary artist who lectures and demonstrates the art of gourmet cooking on her own cable television program, periodically in Farmington Community Center and for schools and groups throughout the metro area.

Reservations, at \$15 each, can be made by sending a check made payable to Farmington OWL to Ione Reichel, 35145 Grand River, Farmington 48024.

OWL programs scheduled for the coming months are called "Finance and the Older Woman," "Grief and Loss" and "Women and Government."

All programs scheduled by the local chapter are open to all interested persons without charge. They are scheduled for 7 p.m. Mondays on alternate months of the year in Farmington Branch Library.

Inquiries are taken by Nicoll at 474-3094.



Judge Pamela Harwood will talk about obstacles to advancement and dead-end jobs for women when she joins members and guests of Farmington Chapter, Older Women's League (OWL) in celebration of the national organization's fifth birthday. Harwood is judge of the 36th District Court in Detroit and was a coordinator and speaker for the International Year's Year Conference.



Robert Taylor, a member of First Presbyterian Church of Farmington, took the picture of the Central American craftsman while on vacation in

Panama. The crafter produces moles, hand-embroidered wall hangings.

## Recovered schizophrenic takes award for speaking out

Mental Health Association in Michigan (MHAM) has selected Joanne S. Verbanic, a Ford Motor Credit Co. employee and a resident of Farmington Hills as the recipient of the 1985 Citizen Award.

Verbanic, a recovered schizophrenic, is being honored for having courageously helped overcome the stigma associated with schizophrenia by speaking publicly about the disease and its effects.

MHAM is a statewide citizens advocacy agency which receives major support from Michigan's United Way agency. It is an affiliate of the National Mental Health Association.

The MHAM Citizen Award is presented annually to the Michigan citizen whose efforts on behalf of the mentally ill have encouraged social action, involvement and understanding.

"One of the great obstacles faced by the mentally ill," says R. William Gri-

er, MHAM's director of facility liaison services, "is the stigma associated with their illness. This stigma often isolates the mentally ill from their families, friends and society in general."

"She has been able to successfully pursue a career and to fulfill her role as a mother throughout the period of her illness. By speaking publicly about her experiences as a schizophrenic, she has raised the public's awareness of this disease and has brought the hope of rehabilitation and re-entry into the mainstream of American life to thousands suffering from mental illness."

VERBANIC BEGAN volunteer work on behalf of the mentally ill in July 1984 after she was diagnosed as recovered from schizophrenia. In March 1985, she appeared on two television shows, "Telly and Company" and "Telling Secrets," to describe her expe-

riences and to publicize Schizophrenics Anonymous, a self-help support group she has formed.

In addition, she will become a member of the MHAM Board of Directors later this year.

Upon learning of her selection as the Citizen Award recipient, Verbanic said, "I am truly honored to receive this award. But I want to emphasize that my recovery and the effects of my volunteer work are not my doing alone."

"In particular, I would like to thank my psychiatrist, Dr. Michael Mesler and Dr. Howard Friedman, for their care and treatment, and my co-workers at Ford Motor Credit Co. for the encouragement and support they have given me, both on the job and in my efforts to erase the stigma experienced by those afflicted with schizophrenia."

"This is just the beginning, but winning starts with beginning," she said.

## Health division honors couples

The Metro Detroit State of Israel Bonds Professional Health Services Division will host its annual Maimonides Awards Dinner at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, Oct. 22 in the social hall of Adas Shalom Synagogue.

The division, representing physicians of diverse disciplines, will pay tribute to three doctors and their wives, named as "Tribute Dinner" honorees.

Dr. Hershel Sandberg, division chairman, announced that Dr. and Mrs. Albert I. Ragins of Franklin, Dr. and Mrs. Milton K. Miller of Bloomfield Hills and Dr. and Mrs. Sanford Rosenfield of West Bloomfield will be the recipients of State of Israel Maimonides Awards, in recognition of their leadership in and support of the division, which seeks to gain loan-fund dollars for Israel's economic upbuilding.

The Israel Bond Maimonides Award was first presented in 1977; the recipient was Dr. Albert Sablin, for his polio vaccine.

Dinner chairman is Dr. Mark Goldberg, co-chairman are Mrs. Esther Borovoy, Joel I. Hamburger and Arthur Lieberman.

RAGINS EARNED his medical degree from Wayne State University and served his internship and residency at Wayne County General Hospital. He earned a research fellowship in the department of gastroenterology, University of Michigan, and was certified as a diplomate in 1983. He was an instructor in internal medicine at University Hospital and was appointed clinical assistant professor at Wayne State University School of Medicine.

Ragins has served as chief of Department of Medicine at Detroit Army Hospital and chief of medicine and chief of

gastroenterology at St. Joseph Mercy Hospital in Pontiac.

He is a member of six major professional societies and serves on the board of directors of the Oakland County Medical society. He is an Israel Bonds Medical division former chairman and

former member of the board of Pontiac Rotary Club.

Both he and his wife, Alice, a former high school teacher, are longtime leaders in Congregation Shaarey Zedek. She

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## SERRV

### Traveling international boutique makes 3-day stop here for the shoppers

The work of artisans from about 40 countries will be up for sale Thursday through Saturday, Oct. 31 to Nov. 2 in Farmington. Presbyterian Church of Farmington on Farmington Road and 41 Mile.

The local church is one of the stops for SERRV (Sales Exchange for Refugee Rehabilitation) which is an ecumenical church-related program in the U.S. created to provide a market for artisans in developing countries who can produce high quality handicrafted items.

"We're heavy on Christmas ornaments and decorations from El Salvador, Jordan, Nepal, Taiwan and Thailand, and the crochets sets from India this year," said Nancy Davis, one of the congregation who is working on the sale this year.

"There's a lot of jewelry from Haiti, Korea, the sterling from Mexico, the shells from the Philippines and jade from Taiwan, because these are always the items that sell the best here."

Better than one-half of the list price for all SERRV items are returned directly to the producer. The retail price, always well below what might normally be expected, is determined by adding duty, and shipping fees.

The church keeps no money from the sale, but it has never had a lack of members come forth to volunteer their

time in setting up the SERRV boutique. "It takes at least two to three full weeks of work from the time we get our shipment unpacked and inventoried to the time we get it all re-packed and shipped on after the sale," Davis said. "But we've been doing it for a long time because we all like the philosophy."

THE COMMITMENT the church members here feel toward SERRV is the same commitment voiced by Church of the Brethren general board, when it began its labor to achieve principles of self-worth and better standards of living for all people, as sponsors of the sale.

Living conditions of refugees in post World War II Germany sparked the ministry in the late 1940's. SERRV got underway when some Americans working in the refugee camps brought back samples of handicrafts and sold them through the Church of the Brethren.

As worldwide economic stress, political uprisings and natural disasters continued to leave increasing numbers of persons in poverty, SERRV kept expanding its scope. Through a cooperative relationship with Church World Service, SERRV keeps increasing its supply sources and expanding its market potential.

SERRV now markets about 1,500

handicrafts from about 200 producers. Much of the work is sold in the pre-Christmas season through churches or civic organizations throughout the U.S. Permanent shops selling the international works have been established in California, Illinois, Indiana and Maryland.

"It all started with the emphasis put on refugee rehabilitation. Now the emphasis on the economic development of the developing countries," Davis said. "Our congregation has always been not only willing, but eager, to get behind this."

THE CHRISTMAS markets also bring better than \$1 million to SERRV overseas producers on five continents and numerous islands around the world. Davis said that the boutique set up here will bring in "anywhere from \$5-10,000 on any given year."

There will be a large variety of clothing and many embroidered pieces coming from Bolivia to the sale this year; carved figures and animals from Kenya and Jordan; and teak and rosewood items from India and Lebanon.

"The jewelry, fashioned from amber, jade, turquoise and silver are exceptional," Davis said. "Several countries send cotton, silk or woven scarves and wall hangings."

## Charity yule card page coming Oct. 28

The Observer & Eccentric's annual charity yule card page — a public service — will be published in all editions of the Monday, Oct. 28, newspaper. The page this year will be in full color for the first time.

Non-profit and non-political organizations are invited to submit to the Observer & Eccentric Newspaper by Thursday, Oct. 17, five copies of each card they will be selling. Send the cards to: O&E Charity Card Page, 9531 Schoolcraft, Livonia 44124.

The newspaper reserves the right to select one sample for publication. More than one style of card is submitted.

EVERY PERSON will be made to publish a yule card for each organization by Oct. 17. Cards received later will be published throughout the holiday season as space permits.

Information pertaining to ordering the cards will appear with photographs of the cards to aid readers in making a selection.

As in the past, organizations are re-

quested to include such information as: Price per box and number of cards per box; Price for larger quantities; Price for imprints and designs for imprints.

Where cards can be purchased; Telephone number, if more information is needed.

In addition to publishing the cards, the O&E will continue another tradition, that of having display books of charity cards for public viewing at five of our offices: Birmingham, 1221 Bowers, Rochester, 410 Main, Farmington, 3223 Grand River, Livonia, 9531 Schoolcraft, and Plymouth, 450 S. Main.

The display books will be available beginning Monday, Oct. 23.

The holiday yule card feature was begun by the Observer & Eccentric several years as a public service on behalf of the many area charitable organizations who use the sale of holiday cards as a means of fund-raising and for residents who want to help them by buying the cards.